

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a theater including a representation, associated with a particular person, to provide a choice of visual presence of the particular person, including at least a personalized three-dimensional avatar representation of the particular person based on sensed geometric features of the particular person;

a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different choices of visual presence of the particular person during a session in the theater; and

a player to present the theater at a remote location,

wherein the particular person is at least one user of the rich media communication system, the rich media communication system further including:

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

2. (Currently Amended) A rich media theater controller, comprising:
a theater window having a background presentation scene; and
a presentation control to allow a rich media communication user of the theater window to select a particular character for a presentation in the theater window,

wherein the presentation of the particular character may be selected from a three-dimensional avatar, a blue screen cutout of the character, an audio presentation, or a video

presentation, the presentation control further including capability to switch between different presentations of that particular character during a session in the theater window, the rich media theater controller further including:

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a user who acts as a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

3. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:

a theater window having a representation associated with a particular person, the theater having a media target onto which the person may direct media, the representation including at least a selectable personalized three-dimensional avatar representation of the particular person based on sensed geometric features of the particular person;

a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater window; and

a player to present the theater window to a remote location,

wherein the particular person is at least one user of the rich media communication system, the rich media communication system further including:

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

4. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 3, wherein the person may drop a predetermined theater into the theater window to generate a custom theater window.

5. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 3, wherein the person may drop an avatar into the theater window to generate an avatar image within the stage.

6. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 3, wherein the theater includes a stage having a plurality of media targets, and rich media may be dropped on the stage for display in the media targets.

7. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 6, wherein media dropped onto the stage is presented in the first available media target.

8. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 6, wherein a still image is dropped onto a particular media target and the still image is shown presented in the particular media target.

9. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 6, wherein a video stream is dropped onto a particular media target and the video stream is shown presented in the particular media target.

10. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 6, wherein audio media dropped on the stage is played by the system.

11. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a theater having a background presentation scene with rich media targets, including capability to provide a non-real-life-equivalent background presentation scene, and

having a selectable three-dimensional avatar representation associated with a particular person, the avatar representation being driven by visual sensing of geometric features of the particular person; and

~~a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater; and~~

a player to present the theater at a remote location,

wherein the particular person is at least one user of the rich media communication system, the rich media communication system further including:

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

12. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 11, wherein the avatar representation may have selectable behaviors.

13. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 11, wherein the visual sensing is performed by a sensor using wavelet-based feature tracking.

14. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 13, wherein the tracking sensor may be trained with varying expressions of the person.

15. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 11, further comprising a module that allows construction of a personalized avatar representation which is based on an image of the person.

16. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a theater including a visual representation associated with a particular person; and
~~a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different~~
~~representations of the particular person during a session in the theater; and~~
a communicator to present the theater to a remote location using a rich media
messaging directory service, and to communicate rich media content for the theater,
wherein the particular person is at least one user of the rich media communication
system, the rich media communication system further including:
a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined
communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having
rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one
hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels
including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood
including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

17. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a theater to provide rich media presentations which include a visual representation
associated with a particular person, the theater being independent of other theaters that include
visual representations associated with other persons; and
~~a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different~~
~~representations of the particular person during a session in the theater; and~~
an online directory to locate users capable of communicating with rich media
presentations and to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities,
each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media
content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level
being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including cities, the cities
including neighborhoods, the neighborhoods including houses, and the houses having rooms.

18. (Previously Presented) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 17, wherein the directory includes a user's personalized address book

19. (Previously Presented) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 17, wherein the directory includes a listing of users.

20. (Previously Presented) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 17, wherein the directory includes a rich media card having a user's rich media communication parameters for communicating with the user.

21. (Previously Presented) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 20, wherein the rich media card of a user may be transmitted to another user.

22. (Previously Presented) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 20, wherein a user's rich media card may be requested by another user.

23. (Previously Presented) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 17, wherein the directory includes user blocking wherein a user may block rich media communications from selected other users.

24. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a status window indicating rich media communications received, the user's visibility to other users, the user's availability to other users, and the user's automatic response to rich media communication messages from other users;

a theater having the status window and including a visual representation associated with a particular ~~person~~user; and

a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular ~~person~~user during a session in the theater; and

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including cities, the cities including neighborhoods, the neighborhoods including houses, and the houses having rooms.

25.-27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system as defined in claim ~~27~~29, wherein the moderator may control access to the associated level including blocking of a particular user accessing a room.

29. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system ~~as defined in claim 27, comprising:~~

a rich media client to communicate rich media communications between users;

a theater including a visual representation associated with a particular person;

a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater;

a directory to organize rich media communication users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content;

wherein the communities are organized in hierarchical levels;

wherein predetermined hierarchical levels are associated with a user who acts as a moderator for the level; and

wherein the hierarchical levels ~~comprise~~ include cities, where the cities include neighborhoods, the neighborhoods include houses, and the houses have rooms.

30. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a theater window having a representation associated with a particular person, the theater window having a stage onto which the particular person may direct rich media and being independent of other theater windows having representations associated with other persons;
a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater window; and
wherein the particular person is at least one user of the rich media communication system, the rich media communication system further including:
a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room; and
a client to publish the theater window to a rich media website.

31. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a message center having a message reader, the message reader having a text message window and a rich media presentation window, wherein the rich media window may be toggled off such that a user may first read only the text message before requesting transmission of a rich media message for presentation in the presentation window;
a theater having the message center and including a visual representation associated with a particular person; and
a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a user who acts as a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

~~a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater.~~

32. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a monitor window that shows, to a particular person creating a rich media presentation, a live video image of the particular person with sensing control points overlaid on the particular person's image to show feature tracking performance; and

a presentation control to allow switching between this image of the particular person and at least one of a live video image of the particular person, or a blue screen cutout of the particular person,

wherein the particular person is at least one user of the rich media communication system, the rich media communication system further including:

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent monitor window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

33. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a server infrastructure to provide web hosting, message hosting and communication services;

at least one content client that includes an authoring tool to generate a rich media communication;

a theater including a visual representation associated with a particular person;

~~a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater; and~~

a plurality of communicator clients to display, using the server infrastructure, the rich media communication in the theater at remote locations,

wherein the particular person is at least one user of the rich media communication system, the rich media communication system further including:

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

34. (Original) A rich media communication system as defined in claim 33, wherein the communicator client includes a message center, a renderer, and an encoder.

35. (Currently Amended) A method for generating and rendering rich media communications, the method comprising:

receiving media elements from a plurality of media sources and generating a multiplexed rich media communication bit stream having the media elements;

transmitting the bit stream to a receiver;

decomposing the bit stream into separate rich media elements;

rendering the rich media elements to generate a rich media theater, the theater including a visual representation associated with a particular ~~person~~user; and

organizing rich media communications users in a directory of user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media elements, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the cities including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

~~providing capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater.~~

36. (Currently Amended) A method for rich media communication, the method comprising:

providing a theater window having a background presentation scene;

selecting a particular character for a presentation in the theater window, wherein the presentation of the particular character may be selected from a three-dimensional avatar, a blue screen cutout of the particular character, an audio presentation, or a plain video presentation; and

providing capability to switch between different presentations of the particular character during a session in the theater window; and

organizing rich media communications users in a directory of user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including cities, the cities including neighborhoods, the neighborhoods including houses, and the houses having rooms.

37. (Currently Amended) A method for rich media communication, the method comprising:

providing a theater window having a representation associated with a particular ~~person~~user;

providing a media target in the theater window onto which the particular ~~person~~user may direct media and which is independent of other theater windows of other ~~persons~~users;

presenting the theater window to a remote location; and

organizing rich media communications users in a directory of user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the cities including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

~~providing capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater window.~~

38. (Currently Amended) A method for rich media communication, the method comprising:

providing a theater having a background presentation scene with rich media targets, including providing capability to select a background presentation scene that contains a non-real-life-equivalent background;

generating in the theater an avatar representation associated with a particular ~~person~~user;

driving the avatar representation by visual sensing of the particular ~~person~~user;

presenting the theater including the avatar representation at a remote location; and

organizing rich media communications users in a directory of user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including cities, the cities including neighborhoods, the neighborhoods including houses, and the houses having rooms.

~~providing capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater window.~~

39. (Currently Amended) A method for rich media communication, the method comprising:

providing a theater including selectable visual representations associated with a particular ~~person~~user;

presenting the theater to a remote location using a rich media messaging directory service; and

allowing switching between different visual representations of the particular ~~person-user~~user during a session in the theater; and

organizing rich media communications users in a directory of user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the cities including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

40. (Currently Amended) A method for rich media communication, the method comprising:

providing rich media presentations which include a visual representation associated with a particular person, including providing capability to select a three-dimensional avatar representation of the person based on sensed geometric features of the person;

allowing switching between different visual representations of the particular person during a session; and

locating users capable of communicating with the rich media presentations using an online directory; and

organizing such users in user-defined communities in the online directory, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including cities, the cities including neighborhoods, the neighborhoods including houses, and the houses having rooms.

41. (Currently Amended) A method of rich media communication, the method comprising:

providing a theater window having a representation associated with a particular ~~person~~user, the theater window having a stage onto which the particular ~~person~~user may direct rich media, the theater window being independent of other theater windows having stages on which other ~~persons~~users may direct rich media;

~~allowing switching between different visual representations of the particular person during a session in the theater window; and~~

~~publishing the theater window to a rich media website; and~~

~~organizing rich media communications users in a directory of user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the cities including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.~~

42. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:

a theater having a background presentation scene with rich media targets and having an avatar representation associated with a ~~person~~user, the avatar representation being driven by visual sensing of the particular ~~person~~user;

a sensor to perform the visual sensing by using wavelet-based feature tracking;

~~a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater; and~~

a player to present the theater at a remote location, and

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater window having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a user who acts as a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

43. (Previously Presented) The rich media communication system of claim 42 wherein the sensor may be trained with varying expressions of the person.

44. (Currently Amended) A rich media communication system, comprising:
a theater having a background presentation scene with rich media targets and having an avatar representation associated with a particular person, the avatar representation being driven by visual sensing of the particular person;
a player to present the theater at a remote location;
a module that allows construction of a personalized avatar representation which is based on an image of the particular person; and

wherein the particular person is at least one user of the rich media communication system, the rich media communication system further including:

a directory to organize rich media communications users into user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the city including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

~~a presentation control to allow capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater.~~

45. (Previously Presented) The rich media communication system of claim 44, further comprising a sensor to perform the visual sensing using wavelet-based feature tracking.

46. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:
a means for providing an independently customizable theater window having a representation associated with a particular ~~person~~user;
a means for providing a media target in the theater window onto which the particular ~~person~~user may direct media; and
a means for presenting the theater window to a remote location; and

~~a means for providing capability to switch between different representations of the particular person during a session in the theater window~~ organizing rich media communications users in a directory of user-defined communities, each user being associated with their own respective independent theater having rich media content, the communities being organizable in hierarchical levels, at least one hierarchical level being associated with a moderator for that level, the hierarchical levels including at least one city, the cities including at least one neighborhood, the neighborhood including at least one house, and the house having at least one room.

47. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 46, further comprising:

a means for receiving media elements from a plurality of media sources and generating a multiplexed rich media communication bit stream;

a means for transmitting the bit stream to a receiver;

a means for decomposing the bit stream into rich media elements; and

a means for rendering the rich media elements to generate the theater.

48. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 46, further comprising additional means for operating and for providing additional features for the theater.